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SUBJECT: NIGERIA-EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND
DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE (EDDI)-AMBASSADORS' GIRLS'
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

REF:(1)ABUJA 01439 DATED AUGUST 22, 2003, AND(2) ABUJA
595 DATED APRIL 01, 2003 ON NIGERIA-EDUCATION FOR
DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE (EDDI);
AMBASSADORS' GIRLS' SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

¶11. This is an action cable. Please see paragraph 7.

¶12. As 2003 rapidly draws to closure, the USG Nigeria EDDI Committee is concerned that we have not yet heard from USAID/AFR/SD regarding a decision on the appropriate mechanism that would allow for the financing and oversight of the remaining two to three years of the current Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program (AGSP). We are herein repeating the text of our earlier cables, Abuja 595 dated April 01, 2003, and Abuja 01439 dated August 22, 2003, on this matter and await your decision and reply.

¶13. Summary: The USG EDDI Committee is concerned about the mechanisms that will be used to implement the Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program, as presented in earlier cables and in debriefings with USAID/AFR/SD in Abuja in July 2003. Post requests specific guidance on the disbursement and oversight mechanism for Girls Scholarships over the next two to three years, given the current contract is due to end in December 2003. End Summary.

¶14. Background: The current Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program in Nigeria provides scholarships and mentoring to 600 girls. The scholarships assist the girls to complete one full cycle in the Nigerian education system (the three years of the Junior Secondary School, grades 7 through 9) or to attend special needs schools. The mentoring component is implemented through local NGOs in each of the participating states, and provides for a mentor to visit each scholarship recipient at least once a term over a two-year period. The NGOs are not "paid" for their services, but instead volunteering to act as facilitators for the mentors, with each mentor receiving about \$100 to cover transportation costs for the series of visitations with their students. Scholarships are for an average annual amount of \$900 per student, disbursed in three yearly allotments of about \$400, \$250 and \$250. The first year's funds cover a number of items that are used for the duration of the scholarship period (desk, chair, uniforms, etc). Funding to date has covered Year 1 (October 2002-July 2003) costs of this program. Remaining funds are for Year 2 (October 2003-July 2004) and Year 3 (October 2004-July 2005), with the program, in theory then, concluding in FY05. However, due to a delayed start-up in Kano State, this state is a year behind, necessitating support and oversight through FY06.

¶15. The current program began in August 2002, with a budget of \$600,000. About \$540,000 is for the scholarship component, and about \$60,000 facilitates the mentoring activity. Administrative costs for implementing the program in Nigeria are provided from EDDI central funds, administered through the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) as the prime contractor. Winrock International, a U.S.-based private, non-profit organization registered in Nigeria, is the sub-contractor under SAIC implementing

the program in Nigeria. While it appears that SAIC's contract with EDDI has been extended through September 2004, Winrock's subcontract is currently only valid through December 2003, well before the promised scholarships are scheduled to end.

16. Pipeline Analysis: As of September 2003, a total of \$235,287 program funds are expected to have been committed. The balance of \$364,714 is earmarked for the remaining years of the current scholarship scheme, to complete the three-year Junior Secondary School cycle promised to each girl scholar participant. At present, Winrock plans to open bank accounts for the current scholarship recipients, to ensure availability of funds for the remaining two to three years of their scholarships. Given that the Winrock contract will end in December 2003, it is not clear how the remaining scholarships and mentors will continue to be funded.

17. Action Requested: The USG EDDI Committee is unclear as to the mechanism that would allow for the financing and oversight of the remaining two to three years of the current scholarship program. Will there be an extension of the current Winrock subcontract with SAIC, and of the SAIC contract itself, to allow disbursement and oversight of the scholarship funds over the next two to three years? Or will there be a mechanism to transfer scholarship funds, and responsibility, to a new African Education Initiative (AEI) contractor? In short, how will EDDI ensure that the current scholarship recipients actually receive the promised support for the remaining two to three years of their scholarships? Failure to fund the remaining years would pose an extreme embarrassment to the USG in Nigeria. The education of some 600 girls in Nigeria, who now depend on these scholarships, is at stake. Please advise.

MEECE